FROM THE
ANDREW PRESTON PEABODY
FUND
February 1, 1927

TWENTY CASES of CONSCIENCE

Propounded to the

BISHOPS,

Or others, who are called

FATHERS in GOD.

For them to Anſwer;

That the Blind may not be turned out of the Way, nor the People Periſh for lack of Knowledge. And that the Way of Truth may be known from the Way of Errour.

The which alſo may ſerve as a Glaſs, to ſhew to the Ignorant the Spots and Deformities in the Way of their Worſhip.

As alſo ſome of the Reaſons why many Godly People Refuſe to Worſhip with the Multitude.

By *J. C.*

Their fear towards me is taught by the Precepts of men.
In vain do they worſhip me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.

Si Chriſtum diſcis, ſatis eſt, ſi cætera neſcis.
Si Chriſtum neſcis, nihil eſt, ſi cætera diſcis.

I SEeing the Scripture ſaith, *That we may not do the leaſt evil, that good may come of it, and that no man can redeem his Brother out of the Pit, nor be a Ranſome for his Soul; but every man is to be perſwaded in his own mind*, and ſo to obey:

The Caſe of Conſcience to be Reſolved, is, Whether any perſon, or perſons coun el whatſoever, ſhould be imbraced and followed, untill, or unleſs a man be firſt perſwaded of it (and ſatisfied concerning it) in his own Judgement and Conſcience, without ſinning againſt God, and procuring his diſpleaſure, for his Lame Sacrifice, and Blind Obedience?

II. Seeing we read in the Scriptures, in ſundry places, *That every man muſt*

give

give an account of himself to God, and appear before his Judgement Seat, to give an account for things done in the body, whether they be good or evil; and the Soul that sinneth he shall dye. These things rightly and truly considered,

The Case of Conscience to be Resolved, is, Whether a man that thus believes, may without sin at any time, or in any wayes, go, or do, contrary to his Conscience, and Perswasion herein; notwithstanding any Threats, or Penalties, or Lawes made by any man or men, to the contrary whatsoever?

III. Seeing the great Apostle saith, *Follow me, as I follow Christ*; and the Apostle *John* saith, *He that believeth in Christ, ought himself so to walk, even as he also walked*: and the Apostle *Peter* saith, *Christ suffered for us, leaving us an Example, that we should follow his Steps.* These things truly believed,

The Case of Conscience to be Resolved, is, Whether such a man, that is so perswaded, as aforesaid, may follow any Example, or Examples, (in any men) who walk either contrary, or not according to the Practices of Christ and his Apostles, before mentioned, without sinning against the Light and Grace of Christ in his own Conscience?

IIII. Seeing *Peter* and *John* were commanded by the Council, *To speak no more at all, nor teach in the Name of Jesus*; to which *Peter* and the other Apostles answered and said, *We ought to obey God, rather than men.* And seeing *Pharoah* King of *Egypt*, commanded *Israel to stay in the Land, and to observe his Orders, and charged them with Rebellion for their Refusal*; yet did they not observe his Command, but chose to obey the Lord, in passing to the Land which he had given them: And seeing *Daniel*, and the three Children, Refused *Nebuchadnezzars* Command, notwithstanding the great Penalty that was to Insue; and you justify them in so doing,

The Case of Conscience to be Resolved, is, Whether Disobedience to men, and their Laws, may not *sometimes*, and in *some cases* be justly esteemed, and accounted Obedience to God, and may be done as truly for Conscience sake, as *Submission* and *Subjection* may be said to be unto other Commands, that are Lawful and Just?

V. Seeing the Old Testament saith, *That every thing in difference was to be confirmed out of the mouth of two or three Witnesses*, not mentioning or commanding that the Witnesses should swear; but on the contrary hath provided that the false witnesses for their Testimony, *shall suffer the same punishment*, that he should have done against whom they witnessed, had their Testimony *been true*: and seeing that the Kings of *Israel were neither made by an Oath*, nor the People *Sworn to Subjection*; And in the New-Testament, there is no example of any man, that ever *Swore* or took *a Formal Oath* (by vertue of Gods Command) but on the contrary, there is a Cloud of Witnesses against all Swearing; as Christ saith in *Mat.* 5. *Swear not at all*; and the Apostle *Paul* changes the word SWEAR, into the word CONFESSE *to God*, in two of his Epistles, *Rom.* 14. *Phil.* 2. and saith, *Heb.* 6. that Christ is come to do THAT in and amongst True Beleivers, which an *Oath* did, or was taken to *do* in the times of the Law, which was *to end Strif and Debate*; and *James* the Apostle saith, *Above all things, Swear not*, neither *by this*, nor *that, nor any other Oath.* These things truly believed and received in simplicity as they are spoken.

The Case of Conscience to be Resolved, is, Whether a man that thus believeth, and is satisfied in his heart and Conscience concerning the same, may lawfully, without sinning against the God of Heaven and Earth, take any Oath, or Swear at all in any Case; notwithstanding any Penalties, Laws, or Com-

mands of men to the contrary whatsoever? And whether, if such an one should Swear, either to please the King, or to procure his own Liberty, and save his Estate, whether any of these can become an Atonement for him, or pacifie Gods Wrath and Anger against him for his sin?

VI. Seeing the Scripture saith, *That the Saints ought not to forsake the Assembling of themselves together, but so much the more to meet, as either the day of Trial or Adversitie, or Peace, and Prosperitie doth approach, and would hinder; and if there be a drawing back, or forsaking of Meeting together after Illumination, and knowledge of what is Gods Way and Worship,* (and seeing the Scripture saith) *Gods Soul will take no pleasure in such an one; and that nothing may be expected by him, who so draws back, but a fearful looking for of Judgement, to Devour and Destroy those who so refuse to meet together,*

The Case of Conscience to be Resolved, is, Whether such Person or Persons may, or ought, (without sinning against God, and his, or their own Consciences) refuse to meet with the Saints to Worship God, and wait upon him, according to such a Discovery and Manifestation, notwithstanding any Decree, Proclamation, or Commandment whatsoever to the contrary?

VII. Seeing the Scripture saith, *He that giveth flattering Titles to men, displeaseth the Lord*: And the Apostle saith, *He that Respects mens Persons, commits sin*: And Christ saith, *How can ye Believe, while ye seek Honour one of another?* and his very enemies bore witness for him, *That he Respected no mans Person*; and it is left upon Record, as the Commendation of *Mordecai, That he would not Bow to the Person of* Haman (though the second man in the Kingdom)

The Case of Conscience to be Resolved, is, Whether a man that believes, and is perswaded concerning the Truth of these things, may without sinning against his God (and Provoking him to Wrath) give Flattering Titles to men, or Respect their Persons; notwithstanding any Custom or Command from men to the contrary whatsoever?

VIII. Seeing the Scripture saith, *That they that will live Godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer Persecution*: And Christ saith, *Blessed are you when men Persecute, and Hate you for my Names-sake; and he that will be Christs Disciple, must suffer with him, and take up his Cross daily, and follow him, that he may find Rest to his Soul; and he that will Reign with him, must Suffer with him; and those that follow the Lamb, are said to go through great Tribulations*;

The Case of Conscience to be Resolved, is, Whether a man that is perswaded concerning the Truth of these things, may without sinning against his God, avoid or Fly from suffering for Christ, though it be to the loss of Libertie, Estate and Life also, if he be thereunto called, without sinning against Christ, and denying him before men; notwithstanding any command from any of the Sons of men to the contrary?

IX. Seeing many say, *They are the Apostles Successors, and sent by Christ; and yet neither walk in his Steps, nor his Apostles, but contrary to both, wearing Sumptuous Apparrel, and fareing Deliticusly every day, and dwelling in Great Palaces, and Seiled Houses, when as Christ had not whereon to lay his Head; and his Apostles laboured with their Hands, lest they should make the Gospel Chargeable; and it was their Meat and Drink to do their Masters will; and some of them said they could do nothing against, but for the Truth, and they had learned to be content in every Condition: and seeing those that say they are their Successors, and cannot be content in any Condition, but are changing with Times, and seeking great things for themselves,*

The Case of Conscience to be Resolved, is, Whether a man that is truly Enlightned with the knowledge of these things, may give the tenth of his increase, or otherwise maintain and uphold these aforesaid, who walk contrary to the Steps, Practices, and Examples of Christ and his Apostles, without sinning against Christ, in his so doing, and bring upon himself Gods Plagues, for not coming out of their sins?

X. Seeing the Scripture saith, *The Kingdome of Heaven cometh not with outward Observation, Loe, here, or Loe, there; neither standeth in Meates Drinkes, or Apparrels, but in Righteousnes and Peace, and Joy in the Spirit*; and a man believing these things.

The Case of Conscience to be Resolved, is, Whether for such an one, to go after such outward Observations, and to joyn with those that cry them up (and impose them upon great Penalties) as the True Religion, and best Reformed Church, is not a sin against God, and a neglecting of his Command, who saith, *Come out from among them, and be ye Separate, and I will receive you*; and against Christs Command, who saith, *Go not after them*; and contrary to the Apostles Doctrine, who saith, *There is no fellowship between the Table of God, and the table of Devills*; notwithstanding any Law or Commandement from any man or men whatsoever?

XI. Seeing the Scripture saith, *God is a Spirit, and will be Worshipped in Spirit and Truth*; *and that he seeketh such to Worship him*,

The Case of Conscience to be Resolved, is, Whether a man that is perswaded of the Truth thereof (and is acquainted with Gods Spirit) and sees men going on to set up a Form without the Power, and to set up Deceit, and Hypocrisie, quite out of Truth and Sincerity, and that man joyn with them in their Dissimulation, *as to thank God* (as they call it) *For their* Election *before time*, and Vocation *in time*, and *for their* Sanctification *and* Justification, *and Future hope of* Glorification; and at the same time say, *Lord have Mercy upon us Miserable Sinners, we have Erred and Strayed from thy Wayes, like lost Sheep; and there is no health in us*: and then say again, *As it was in the Beginning, is now, and ever shall be, World without End*, Whether a man may with a safe Conscience, or can by the Spirit of Truth, *say these things* without great Sin and Iniquity against God; and as being Guilty both of *Mockery* and *Lying*? for though these things are spoken by *Drunkards, Swearers*, and *Lyars*, [Now] yet it was not so from the *Beginning*, neither shall it be so in the *World without End*, nor when the people *shall be all Righteous*, and there shall be no Destroyer upon all the Holy Mount, nor any that worketh Abomination, or maketh a Lye.

XII. Seeing the Scripture saith, *That the Spirit helpeth our Infirmities, and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*; *and that the Prayers of the Wicked are Abomination unto God*; *and he that hath a Male in his flock, and offers to God a Female, is Accurst*; *And the Spirit of God is called the Spirit of Prayer, and Supplication*; *and seeing that Necessities and Wants are the ground of Petitions and Complaints*; and seeing the Scripture saith, *That Christ hath lighted every man that cometh into the world with the True Light*, that thereby they may see their Wants and Necessities, and from the sence thereof, and in that Light pray unto God for Supplies;

The Case of Conscience to be Resolved, is, Whether a man that thus believes, and in his heart is perswaded of the Truth thereof, may, or ought to conform to, and joyn in, and with such Prayers, as are Artificially made, and by the Prophane performed, and put up to a God, whom they know not, with-

without sin and wickedness against the Pure God? Seeing, *He that Names the Name of Christ, is to depart from Iniquity*; neither *can any man say in Truth, that Christ is Lord, but by the Holy-Ghost:* And for these Prayers and Services to be Imposed upon him, as long as he lives without any Variation, both in that time when he was without *Grace*, and after if he come to *Receive Grace*; and also when he comes to be strong in *Grace*; and if he goes about to Depart or Separate from the *Prayers* and *Services* aforesaid, he thereby makes himself a Prey; whether this be not *great Wickedness* in Gods sight, and Provokes to Jealousie the Eyes of his Glory, and will bring Swift Destruction upon him that departs not from them?

XIII. Seeing the Scripture saith, *The Church is in God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that it is the Ground and Pillar of Truth, and without Spot or Wrinkle (or any such thing) Built up of Living Stones a Holy Temple in the Lord*;

The Case of Conscience to be Resolved, is, Whether a man may meet with a company of *Drunkards*, *Swearers*, and *Lyars*, and *Proud Men* and *Women*; and *Say*, as they *Say*, and *Sit* when they *Sit*, and *Stand* when they *Stand*, and *Sing*, and *Pray*, when and what they *Sing* and *Pray*, and *Curse*, and *Bless*, when they *Curse* and *Bless*; and call them a *Church*, and the *Things* and *Gestures* which they *Perform Gods Worship and Service*, without great Abomination before the Lord, and Sinning against God and his own Conscience, considering a Church in the New-Testament, is so described as aforesaid?

XIV. Seeing *England* is called a *Church*, and all the People within the Territories thereto belonging, are said *to be Members thereof*: and you who are called *Bishops*, *and Fathers in God*, are said to take upon you *the Government, and Oversight thereof*; and say, *You follow the Examples of Christ, and the Apostles therein*; who accounted it *their Meat and Drink to do the will of God, and to spend, and be spent for his Name, and the good of his People; Preaching the Word in Season, and out of Season; Confirming the Weak, and Visiting the Sick; and by Sound Doctrine, and a Godly Life, Strove to Convince Gain-sayers, and to stop the Mouths of Opposers:* These things duely considered in our hearts,

The Case of Conscience to be Resolved, is, Whether all those who have gone and strai'd from your wayes, not only because the *Name* of a BISHOP *hath been taken up*, and *the Work neglected*; but also because the Way of your Promotion and Climbing up, hath rather seemed to be like those *John* speakes of in his 16th. Chap. Who are said, *Not to come in at the True Door, but are climed up another Way*, than those *Bishops* did whom *Paul* speakes of in his Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*; who saith, That *a Bishop must be blameless, and a Lover of good Men; not greedy of filthy Lucer, but Patient, not Covetous*; (but seeing the contrary Qualifications are found amongst those that say they are Bishops) whether we should not sin against the living God, and his Righteous Law, if we should not bear Witness against *Such*, and their Wayes? and if we did not do so, whether the God of Heaven & Earth would not leave us to be Partakers *of their Plagues*, because we refused, and were afraid to bear witness for him against their *Sins*?

XV. Seeing the Scripture speaketh of *Being Baptized into one Body, and into Christ, whereby such put on Christ*; and that *there is one Baptisme, and one Faith, and one Hope of our Calling, and one Lord Jesus Christ*;

The Case of Conscience to be Resolved, is, Whether a Man that thus believes, may without sinning against God, call *Sprinkling a little Water in the Face of a Childe*, and *Signing* it with the Sign of *the Crosse*, and to have *three*

or

or *four Men* and *Women* present, to promise that the Childe *shall forsake the Devil, and* ALL *his Works, and Pomps and Vanities of this World*; When as these promising Persons (it may be) never look after the Childe more, nor take Care what becomes of it; but themselves bring forth the Works of the Devil *dayly* in the whole course of their lives, Whether a man may call *this that Baptisme* before named, or a Baptizing into the Congregation of Gods holy Church, *by those Actions, Persons* and *Gestures* aforesaid, without sinning against God, by deep Hipocrisie and Deceit?

XVI. Seeing the Scripture speakes of *Davids not being Puffed in Mind, and of his Mourning by reason of his Sin, and of his Watring his Couch with his Tears, and of having all his Bones broken by reason of his grief, &c.*

The Case of Conscience to be Resolved, is, Whether Men, whose Hearts are hardened in Sin, and who never truly *shed Tears for Sin*, and are both Puffed in Mind, and Filled with Pride; (and seeing We with Others, who know this to be true by dayly Experience,) may lawfully sing these Words and Sayings of *David*, and those aforesaid, that believes these Things to be done in Formality and Hypocrisie, may joyn with them in these Things, and call this Practice the Worship of God, and a Singing to the Praise and Glory of God, without being Guilty of Deep Provocation and Hypocrisie against God?

XVII. Seeing the Scripture speakes of *False Prophets*, both in the *Old* and *New Testament*; and tells us, *That we may know them by their Fruits*, and those *Markes* and *Characters*, laid down in the Scripture to discover them by; *As that they are such as Preach for Hire*, and *Divine for Money*, and *Seek for Gain from their Quarter*, and *Prepare War against*, *or go to Law with those who refuse to put into their Mouthes*, *or to maintain them:* and Christ saith, *We shall know them by their Fruits, as that they are called of Men*, Rabbi, or Lord, or Master; *And that they love* Greetings *in the Market-Place*, *or to be Honoured before the People*, or to have Men put off their Hats unto them, or to stand Bare before them; *and they love the Uppermost Roomes at Feasts, and will have the Cheifest Places in the Synagogues*, or those Places now called Churches; and for their Habit, they go in long Robes of Black like the *Chymarims*: And if People will not pay them, they will prove *like Thrones*, and *Thistles*, to *Scratch*, *Prick*, and *Tear People*: and of such *Men*, or *Trees*, Christ saith, *We must not expect to gather either Grapes or Figgs*. And Christ saith further, That we may throughly know them, *They are like Wolves in Sheeps Cloathing*, or wearing White upon Black; but inwardly Ravening and Devouring, being one thing *in their Words* and *Profession*, and another *in Life* and *Conversation*. And therefore,

The Case of Conscience to be Resolved, is, Whether a Man may Lawfully, without Sinning against God, and Transgressing the Scriptures of Truth, either *Hear*, or *Follow* such Men who bear (as in their Fore-heads) the *Marks* and *Fruits* aforesaid, or *maintain them*, by feeding their Covetous Minds with Hire, or paying as towards the Sheeps Cloathing aforesaid? Or rather, Whether a Man that feareth God, is not bound in Conscience to bear witness against them?

XVIII. Seeing the Papists *plead for a Continued Succession*; and those that are called *Protestant* BISHOPS *do the same*; and both of them being out of *the Life* and *Practices* (and Principles in many things) of *Christ* and *His Apostles*, as by the Scriptures of Truth doth appear, being understood plainly, as they are spoken without *Forced* and *Constrained* Meanings;

The Case of Conscience to be Resolved, is, Whether that kind *of Succession* which

which they both plead for, be that Succeſſion which a Man muſt derive unto himſelf, or he cannot be a True Miniſter of Chriſt? Or whether the *True, Neceſſary*, and *Rightfull Derivative Succeſſion*, ſtands not rather in that ſame Spirit and Power, which the Apoſtles were indued withall from on High, and whereby they were made able Miniſters of the New-Teſtament, not *of the Letter* but *of the Spirit*; and according to which they ſpake, *As it gave them utterance*; And further conſidering, That the *Naturall* or *Outward Succeſſion* before mentioned, *is according unto the firſt Prieſthood*, which ſtood *in a Natural* or *Outward Line*, and *Deſcent*, and was made by a Carnal Commandment, and could not continue by reaſon of Death: but Chriſt was not ſo made a Miniſter or Prieſt, but after another Order, and according to another Law, (viz.) *The Power of an endleſs Life*: According to which the Apoſtles were, and all true Miniſters are made, who are truly the Succeſſors of Chriſt, and his Apoſtles? So that theſe three *Queſtions* for the Reſolving of the Caſe of Conſcience aforeſaid, are neceſſary to be Reſolved;

Firſt, *Whether either* Papiſt or Proteſtant (ſo called) *can derive unto themſelves the continued Apoſtolicall Succeſſion* (aforeſaid) *from Chriſt down-wards to this Day?*

Second Queſt. is, *Whether the Succeſſion aforeſaid, be ſufficient without the Gift of the Spirit, to make a Miniſter of the Goſpel?*

Third Queſt. is, *Whether the Spirit and Power from on High be not of it ſelf, without any further Act or Thing, as* from Man, *or* by Man, *ſufficient, and that only wherein ſtands the Authority that brings unto* Unity *and* Uniformity, *and is according to that Way and Manner that the Apoſtles were made Miniſters? for they ſaid*, They believed, and therefore they ſpake: and when it pleaſed God, to reveale his Son in them, then they went, and Preached the Goſpel, *and did not ſtay for Mans Commiſſion, but Miniſtred from that*; *and not* of Man, *nor* by Man, *nor* from Man, but by the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, *as aforeſaid*; *whoſe ſteps the True Miniſters follow unto this Day, and have Chriſts preſence with them according to promiſe, who ſaid*, And Lo, I am with you alway, even to the End of the World.

XIX. Seeing the *Outward, Naturall*, or *Perſonall Derivative Succeſſion*, is ſo diſputable among thoſe called Chriſtians; and conſidering, if it could be proved, yet its ſufficiency (without the Holy Ghoſt) is *Oppoſed* and *Denied*; and ſeeing, as they ſay, the *Authority* and *Verity* of the Scripture depends upon a Belief and Knowledge of the Succeſſion *Outward* and *Perſonall* as aforeſaid; and ſo from, or by, the Tradition of the Church to be received (as they ſpeak.) Theſe things truly weighed,

The Caſe of Conſcience to be reſolved, is, Whether a Man muſt not Know, and be Turned to ſomthing *within himſelf*, (though not of himſelf) which only can give unto him the certain Knowledge both of the Truth and Authority of the Scripture, (which Gift of Grace in himſelf, is as a Witneſs *in him*, and Seales unto, and Aſſures him of the Truth of what is written, whereby his own heart anſwers the Hearts of thoſe holy men who writ the Scriptures, as face anſwers face in a Glaſs) and whereby he hath Hope and Comfort through the Scriptures? Or whether a Man muſt Believe, and Depend upon them, who ſay they are the Apoſtles Succeſſors, and have received their Power from *Peter*, but do imitate him in little at all, beſides, *in his denying of his Maſter*, and *Diſſembling for fear of the Jews*, for both which he was *blamed and reproved*? And alſo conſidering, that both the *Popiſh Inquiſitions*, and thoſe called

led Protestants, *Compulsions* by *Paines* and *Prisons*; are an Infallible Note or Mark of the False Church and Ministry; both which are Described by their compelling (*All both small and great to worship the Beast and his Image*) by outward *Paines* and *Punishments*, which those that follow the Lamb, and are washed with his Blood, are Saved and Redeemed from; so that they cannot bow down, nor submit unto them.

XX. Seeing that severall *Protestant* Writers, as *Chillingworth*, (who was a Man of Note) and others who have written against *the Papists*, and have affirmed in Opposition to them and their Tenet, *That Right Reason is the Judge of Controversie, and every Mans particular Reason within himself, is Judge for himself*, as hath been affirmed (and that truly) and seeing that Gods Faithfull People do Believe and Preach, *That Gods Gift of Grace and Light in Man is the first Principle of pure Religion and Judge of Controversy, unto which a Man must have his mind turned, and in it believe, before he can Worship God acceptably*: and seeing they agree with the True Protestant Principle herein, and *their Lives* being according *to what they Professe* and *Teach*; and considering those who call themselves *Protestants*, and the *Apostles Successors*, but are not True to the *Protestant Principles*, in that they *Imprison* and *Punish men*, (meerly) for things relating to their Consciences: And thereby condemn *their professed Principles* by their Practices, (and so make themselves Transgressors) and therefore justifie the People of God aforesaid, who separate from them as such Transgressors. These things duly considered of,

The Case of Conscience to be Resolved, is, Whether those Called *Protestants* aforesaid, who have Apostatized from their Principles (and lost both the Life and Power of Religion) should come out of the Apostacy and return to the first and primitive Principle? or whether those who are in the True Principle and Practice (and retain their Integrity) should go into the Apostacy unto them, seeing the Scripture saith, *Go not thou to them, but let them come to thee?*

POST-SCRIPT.

These things are written, not to kindle Dissension, nor to blow up the Coales of Contention; but rather for satisfaction, both to others who are inquiring what the Reason is, why many Godly People separate from those called Bishops? Or why they do not joyn in Commons with the Multitude? As also, to Stir up and Minde those of their Duty, (who say they are Fathers in God) That they may make it appeare (if they are such) and that by a Godly Life, and sound Arguments, to Convince those that are out of the Way, that all may be reclaimed, who have erred from the Way of Life, and be brought back again to the Shepherd, and Bishop of their Souls, that there may be but one Shepherd, and one Sheep-fold; and that there may be no noise of a Hammer heard in the Re-building of the Temple, nor any cries from Prisons, (against those that call themselves Reformers of the Church) but that they may effect the work, to the rejoycing of Sion, and shaming of all Her Enemies; not by Might, nor Power, nor Whips, nor Goales, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts, which shall certainly overturn them, if they refuse to trust to it, & only, and alone make use of it in the Work which they call the Lords.

J. C.

THE END.

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